CLAIMS

What is claimed:

-1-

A starter assembly for a gas discharge lamp, the starter assembly comprising:

at least one switch located in the gas discharge lamp;

a control unit operable for actuating the switch;

wherein the control unit actuates the switch for a predetermined length of time.

-2-

The starter assembly of claim 1, wherein the switch is a normally open magnetic switch.

-3-

The starter assembly of claim 1, wherein the control unit is comprised of an electromagnet operable to close the magnetic switch.

-4-

The starter assembly of claim 3, wherein the control unit further comprises a microprocessor electrically connected to the electromagnet.

-5-

The starter assembly of claim 4, wherein the control unit is programmable to receive a first preheat time for the gas discharge lamp.

-6-

The starter assembly of claim 5, wherein the control unit actuates the switch according to a programmed first preheat time.

-7-

The starter assembly of claim 5, wherein the control unit is programmable to receive a second preheat time.

-8-

the starter assembly of claim 7, wherein the control unit is operable to actuate the switch according to the second preheat time.

-9-

A starter assembly for a gas discharge lamp, the starter assembly comprising:

a magnetic switch located in the gas discharge lamp;

an electronics module operable to actuate the magnetic switch, the electronics module further comprising:

an electromagnet;

a control unit operable to control the operation of the electromagnet;

wherein the electronics module actuates the magnetic switch for a pre-determined length of time.

-10-

The starter assembly of claim 9, wherein the magnetic switch is connected in series between at least two electrodes of the gas discharge lamp.

-11-

The starter assembly of claim 9, wherein the control unit comprises a programmable microprocessor.

-12-

The starter assembly of claim 11 wherein the programmable microprocessor is programmed with a first preheat time.

-13-

The starter assembly of claim 12 wherein the control unit causes the electromagnet to actuate the switch for the first preheat time.

-14-

The starter assembly of claim 12 wherein the programmable microprocessor is further programmed with a second preheat time.

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The starter assembly of claim 14 wherein the control unit causes the electromagnet to actuate the switch for the second preheat time.